

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VOCAL ARTS DC UNVEILS 2024–2025 SEASON

Presenting Five Artists in Debut Recitals

Washington, DC (April 18, 2024) Vocal Arts DC, the renowned advocate of art song in the nation's capital, proudly announces its 2024–2025 season and an enticing array of repertoire. Each artist's performance marks their company and area recital debuts and showcases a delightful blend of pieces never heard by Vocal Arts DC audiences and chestnuts from the standard repertoire.

The season opens on September 12, 2024 with husband and wife duo Lucas and Irina Meachem. **Lucas Meachem** is an international phenomenon, melding a buttery voice with deep artistry in opera and song, the latter highlighted on his debut album with Irina Meachem entitled *Shall We Gather*. He presents Mahler's mournful *Kindertotenlieder* and songs by Willaim Grant Still, Florence Price, and Jake Heggie.

The Gerald Perman Fund for Emerging Artists Recital on November 18, 2024 features South African tenor **Lunga Eric Hallam**, a recent alumnus of Lyric Opera of Chicago's prestigious Ryan Opera Center and admired by DC-area audiences after his acclaimed 2023 Wolf Trap Opera debut as Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) and Jupiter (*Semele*). Recital repertoire to be announced.

Mezzo-soprano **Samantha Hankey** is a gifted concert performer, making her Carnegie Hall recital debut in 2023. On January 14, 2025 she presents Schumann's poignant *Dichterleibe* and songs by Satie, Schoenberg, Trenet, Weill, and Porter.

Countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen** is an adept performer of Baroque and contemporary music with a unique contralto-esque color. On February 20, 2025 he presents his program Departures which includes a wide range of repertoire never before sung by countertenors such as Schumann's *Liederkreis*, and songs by Handel, Korngold, Brahms, Price, and Adams.

Concluding the season on March 14, 2025 is mezzo-soprano **Fleur Barron**, an artist beloved for her fearless commitment to honest communication. Her program entitled The Power and the Glory explores diverse perspectives on colonial history through music and poetry, including Sankaram's rage-inspired "The Far Shore," Azezi and Frenkel's Uyghur song "Mitiz Meshrep," and songs by Valcarcel, Messiaen, Montsalvatge, Mahler, Weill, and Schoenberg.

Patrons will appreciate that Vocal Arts DC offers both full subscriptions and a flexible mini-subscription option, saving up to 20% compared to the cost of single tickets. Subscriptions are available for purchase on the Vocal Arts DC website (vocalartsdc.org/subscribe). Single tickets, priced at \$50 each, will go on sale through the Kennedy Center Box Office in July 2024.

MORE ABOUT THE 2024–2025 RECITALS

Lucas Meachem, baritone

Irina Meachem, pianist

Thursday, September 12, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

Lucas Meachem's vigorous baritone makes him exceptionally suited to his signature roles of Escamillo (*Carmen*), Il Conte di Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), and the title role in *Don Giovanni*, the latter in which he was extolled for being "Fabio-like in size, presence, beauty and personality" (Bachtrack) in a production with LA Opera. Together he and his wife, Irina Meachem, present Gustav Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*, a mournful exploration of parental grief, and pieces from the American art song canon by William Grant Still, Florence Price, and Jake Heggie.

Lunga Eric Hallam, tenor

Craig Terry, pianist

Monday, November 18, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

The Gerald Perman Fund for Emerging Artists Debut Recital

This young South African tenor splashed onto the international opera scene as a semifinalist in the 2019 Neue Stimmen International Singing Competition and the Voice of South Africa International Singing Competition. Soon after, he joined Lyric Opera of Chicago's distinguished Ryan Opera Center, and during the 2022–2023 season earned rapturous reviews for his role debuts as Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) and Jupiter (*Semele*) with Wolf Trap Opera. Hallam's repertoire will be announced.

Samantha Hankey, mezzo-soprano

Myra Huang, pianist

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Dusky-voiced Samantha Hankey is a staple performer of German mezzo-soprano repertoire, recently portraying Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) at the Metropolitan Opera for which she was cited by the *New York Times* as having "tireless energy and dramatic skill." In the 2023–2024 season, Hankey made her debuts at the Royal Opera House as Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), at Detroit Opera as the Fox (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), and at Lyric Opera of Kansas City for her role debut as Santuzza (*Cavalleria Rusticana*). The cornerstone of Hankey's program is *Dichterliebe (A Poet's Love)* by Robert Schumann, a set of 16 cathartic songs that reflect on Schumann's separation from his bride, Clara. This jewel of German lieder sits between Poulenc's masterful *3 Chanson de Federico García Lorca* and songs by Satie, Schönberg, Trenet, Weill, and Porter.

Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, countertenor

John Churchwell, pianist

Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Adept as a performer of Baroque and contemporary music, countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen has a reputation as "a redefining force in the countertenor field" (*Limelight*). With his unique contralto-esque color and precise coloratura, he has excelled in numerous Handel roles (including Medoro in *Orlando*, Ottone in *Agrippina*, and Unulfo in *Rodelinda*) and made a memorable role debut as Oberon in Adelaide Festival's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Britten). Nussbaum Cohen's sweeping program centered around the beauty found in nature presents a wide range of repertoire never before sung by

countertenor. The program includes music by Handel, Korngold, Brahms, Price, and Adams, alongside a newly composed song set by Jake Heggie. Robert Schumann's song cycle, *Liederkreis* Op. 39, which Schumann wrote to his wife was "my most romantic music yet, with much of you in it," rounds out this moving and memorable evening.

Fleur Barron, mezzo-soprano

Kunal Lahiry, pianist

Friday, March 14, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

The Gerald & Ann K. Perman Memorial Recital

Singaporean-British mezzo-soprano Fleur Barron recently made waves as a premier performer of contemporary repertoire after her title role debut in *Adriana Mater* (Saariaho) with the San Francisco Symphony in which she was named "a knockout performer" by *The Times*. She is a versatile artist, singing performances of Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, Ravel's *Shéhérazade*, Montsalvatge's *Cinco Canciones Negras*, and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, and recording the title role in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* during the 2023–2024 season. Barron's program entitled *The Power and the Glory* explores diverse perspectives on colonial history through music and poetry of the last 150 years. From Kamala Sankaram's rage-inspired "The Far Shore" to Zubaida Azezi and Edo Frenkel's Uyghur song "Mitiz Meshrep," the artists encourage their audience to explore uncomfortable issues of the past and present with empathy and understanding. Other composers on the program include Valcarcel, Messiaen, Montsalvatge, Mahler, Weill, and Schoenberg.

These performances are external rentals presented in coordination with the Kennedy Center Campus Rentals Office and are not produced by the Kennedy Center.

All recitals are scheduled for the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater, 2700 F St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20566. All dates, programs and artists are subject to change.

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Vocal Arts DC presents a full season of classical song recitals by some of the world's finest singers at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater. Our performances are supplemented by educational and social events that foster personal contacts between performers, composers and audience members. Typically showcasing a single classically-trained singer and a world-class pianist unaided by amplification, our concerts cover a wide range of the world's great song literature, increasingly including newly composed works commissioned by our performers or by Vocal Arts DC itself. <https://vocalartsdc.org/>